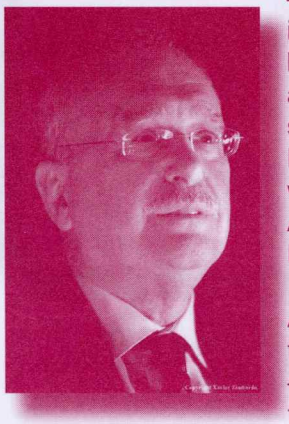
First Word

From Concordia Multi-faith Chaplaincy

Autumn 2005 Vol. 9, No. 1

From Holy War to Holy Peace

Rabbi Howard S. Joseph



I was one of the fortunate – or should I say, blessed – religious leaders gathered in Brussels last spring for the historic conference of Imams and Rabbis for Peace that was sponsored by the Hommes de Parole Foundation of Paris and was under the patronage of Albert II, King of the Belgians and Mohammed VI, King of Morocco.

As the only Canadian Rabbi – there were no Canadian Imams – I felt a special responsibility to maximize the opportunity to interact with Imams, Sheiks and Kadis from almost the entire Muslim world – from Morocco to Uzbekistan. After many decades of involvement with Christian-Jewish dialogue this was my first encounter with Muslim religious leaders. Unfortunately, some Middle Eastern states such as Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Libya were not represented.

Among the outstanding Jewish personalities in attendance were the former Chief Rabbis of Israel and France: Rabbi Eliyahu Bakshi Doron and Rabbi Rene Samuel Sirat. The Jewish participants largely came from Europe and Israel. The small American delegation included Rabbi Irving Yitz Greenberg, a long time advocate of Jewish-Christian dialogue.

About 100 Imams and Rabbis were in attendance as well as about 70 selected experts, Jewish and Muslim professors at various universities including Dean Rabbi Dr. B. Barry Levy of the McGill Faculty of Religious Studies. It was apparent that many of the participants had never before participated in any form of interreligious encounter. Their willingness to meet reflected the great sense of urgency to give voice to Muslim and Jewish religious leaders who wished to recapture the contemporary moment from those who have held our religions hostage to violent and extreme attitudes and actions. We agreed that these have disgraced our religions and diminished respect for religious faith itself.

We asserted the genuine voice of our scriptures that establish the dignity of human beings as the fundamental consequence of religious faith. That is the standard by which true faith must judge itself. Imams and Rabbis both based this idea on the concept found in the Koran and Bible of human beings being created in the Image of God. This was one of the commonalities among the many re-discovered by the two faith communities that for so long have lived together and have only recently been moved apart by narrow and intolerant elements in our communities. We accepted the challenge expressed by Andre Azoulay, Adviser to King Mohammed VI of Morocco, that we must rebuild the ethical and moral space that is common to Islam and to Judaism. Many Israeli Rabbis underlined the profound sharing of Muslim ideas that pervaded medieval Jewish thought and is reflected in the writings of Maimonides and other thinkers.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 SEE *From Holy War...* ▶▶ ▶▶

Meditation (Vipassana)

Practices begin the week of October 17th

Meditation at Loyola
(Loyola Chapel meditation room)
Mondays, 4:45-6:00

SGW Annex Z
(2090 Mackay)
Wednesdays, 11:45-1:00
...and 5:15-6:30

Instruction will be given in the first 15 minutes of the session. It is only required to attend the instruction period the first time you come to a session.

Sessions include sitting and walking meditation and a guided meditation on loving-kindness.

For information contact
Daryl Lynn Ross at daryl.ross@concordia.ca

From Holy War... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

After the first day of dialogue it was clear to all the participants that the genuine voice of faith and morality was present. As an old Talmudic dictum states: words that come from the heart will enter the heart. The personal interaction among the Rabbis and Imams grew between sessions, during coffee breaks and at the dinner tables. We rapidly moved into a relaxed and friendly mode of encounter.

The final resolution called upon all faith communities to renounce violence in the name of their religion and to seek peaceful means to resolving disputes. [The resolution and other related documents can be found at hommesdeparole.org.] The religious leaders present pledged to take this message back to their individual communities and begin to build a more hopeful future. Future conferences are planned to widen the circle of participants and a joint committee was formed to implement the initiatives taken in Brussels and to monitor events and issues that affect Muslim and Jewish relations.

The issue of Middle East peace emerged from time to time but never as an impediment to friendly dialogue. The Muslims present from non-Arab countries reminded everyone that this local issue should not stand in the way of Muslim-Jewish dialogue.

A workshop on difficult texts concerning the 'other' in each tradition came to the realization that this is a large and complex topic involving historical contexts and modes of scriptural interpretation that could not be adequately addressed in this brief session. We hoped that a future conference would appropriately tackle the issue.

We proceeded in the knowledge that there are dangers and the risk of failure in the path of peace we have chosen. We prayed that the atmosphere of openness and reconciliation that we established would continue in many joint efforts for the well being of the world and to restore respect for our faiths. We have tried to move from a situation that appeared to be a Holy War to one that envisions a Holy Peace.

Sikh Students Association of Concordia and McGill Universities

We meet regularly twice a month at the **Newman Centre** - 3484 Peel Street, from 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm.
We have movies, group discussions and socials.
Come and join in.
For more info, contact Manjit Singh, Sikh Associate Chaplain.
e-mail lo.man@sympatico.ca

SERVICES FOR MUSLIM STUDENTS:

DAILY PRAYERS:

Prayer space on SGW Campus: LS-430
Prayer space on Loyola Campus: SC-0302

FRIDAY PRAYERS:

Every Friday 1 PM – 2 PM in LS-430 [SGW]

MEET WITH CONCORDIA'S MUSLIM ASSOCIATE CHAPLAIN:

Imam Salam Elmenyawi meets with students on the third Friday of the month at 2 pm.

MSA LIBRARY - Located at 2020 Mackay

CHECK OUT UPCOMING EVENTS…

…on the bulletin board in LS-430
…or on the web at msa.concordia.ca

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

MSA at 848-2424 x. 7410 or
e-mail msaconcordia@montrealmuslims.ca
Imam Salam Elmenyawi at 748-8427.

CONCORDIA USED BOOK FAIR

Monday and Tuesday,
October 3 & 4, 2005
Hall Building Mezzanine

Sponsored by the Concordia Used Book Fair Volunteers
All proceeds go to charitable causes, such as the Student Emergency Food Fund.

Come and browse! - Come and buy! - Come and help!
We need help with set-up, sorting, monitoring, clean-up, cash, and other tasks.
Volunteers are needed from Sunday –Wednesday, October 2-5, 2005!

If you can help, for a few hours or a whole day,
Contact: Randy Montour: 848-2424 Ext 3593

A note to our Jewish Students...

Chabad Student Centre (3429 Peel) offers Shabbat and Holiday prayers and meals. In addition there is a Kosher Student Bistro on the premises. Rabbi Shlomo Mahn conducts daily Jewish Interest Classes at the Centre and, during the regular academic year, weekly classes at Concordia.

For more information contact
Rabbi Mahn at 842-4663
email: montreal@chabadhouse.org

Insight Meditation
(Vipassana)

Meditation Retreat

December 2-4, 2005

"Peace Within, Good Will to All"

For beginners as well as experienced meditators.

Full-time Students: $50, others $75, all inclusive: residence and vegetarian food.

For information contact
Daryl Lynn Ross at daryl.ross@concordia.ca

Faith without reason could be reduced to a myth or a superstition, while reason without faith would constantly fall short of what she is permanently aspiring for.

- Pope John Paul II

Faith & Reason

A discussion group led by Fr. Georges Pelletier

Thursday 4:30-6:00 PM
Loyola Chapel
(Next to the AD Building)
Beginning November 3rd, 2005

Info: Fr. Georges Pelletier, OMV - 848-2424, Ext 3587
or georgpel@alcor.concordia.ca

Insight Meditation
(Vipassana)

Sunday Practice Days

October 30
November 27
December 29

Annex Z, Room 05 - 9:45 AM to 3:30 PM

A day dedicated to developing mindful awareness in all of life's activities.

The day includes instruction, sitting and walking practice, guided meditation on loving-kindness, a Dharma talk and discussion, Q&A, and a brown bag lunch. It's a great way to deepen your meditation practice and also meet other people who are interested in this way of inner development. Free will donation.

For information and registration: Daryl Lynn Ross
daryl.ross@concordia.ca

Building Bridges
Prison Visit Program

A program of structured group visits with the inmates of the Leclerc Institute in Laval on alternate Thursdays. The size of the group is limited and advance registration is required.

There is a required orientation meeting on Thursday, September 22nd at 6:00 pm in room Z-02 (2090 Mackay)

The first visit will be on September 29th. The group leaves Annex Z at 5:45 PM.

Led by Brian McDonough,
Professor of Theology at Concordia

and Bernie Glover,
Multi-faith Chaplaincy

For more information:
Bernie Glover - 848-2424 Ext.3588
Or drop in at Loyola, AD 130

Join us for a life-changing encounter with some extraordinary people!

Chaplaincy's own 5 à 7 is coming back!

Mother Hubbard's Cupboard

Mother Hubbard's Cupboard is a vegan meal, served in a welcoming atmosphere, together with great community and conversations.

Drop by **Thursdays** anytime between **5:00 pm and 7:00 pm** in Annex Z, Room 105-106 and enjoy good food and great company!

Starting September 22, 2005

Mother Hubbard asks for a donation of $2 to restock her cupboards.

For more information, or if you would like volunteer to help out with Mother Hubbard's Cupboard, contact Ellie Hummel at mohubbs@alcor.concordia.ca or 848-2424, Ext 3590.

The Bible in one hand - the newspaper in the other!

Looking for somewhere to incorporate your spirituality and your social justice work? The first meeting of Concordia's Student Christian Movement is this fall.

Tuesday, September 20th
From 4 - 6 PM

Pizza & Info - Worship to follow
Email: *concordia@scmcanada.org*
http:// www.scmcanada.org

JUSTICE SCM

Catherine Jennings was a beautiful, intellegent young woman that everyone believed loved and enjoyed life, until, earlier this year, when she took her own life. In this article her sister Ruth, a Concordia student, shares some of her memories of Catherine with us as well as sharing her life and questions following this tragedy.

Remembering a Life

Ruth Orlaith Jennings

My sister loved nature. She would walk the Wicklow hills for hours in wind and rain, sometimes without a coat and her red hair astray. As children, our favourite tree was a hawthorn, circled with daffodils and purple crocuses, and we called it the fairy tree, as many protective hawthorn are called in Ireland, and made up stories in its' branches, our jeans streaked green and dun from wood and wet grass. Our home was backed by an arc of fir and birch in a valley of rolling hills crowned with heather and bog. At night, from the living room window we watched distant tail-lights of planes skim into the orange band and mouth of Dublin city. Those lights seemed a world away to us.

My sister loved to laugh. I remember how much she loved music and to dance. I think about the way her lightness and humour moved people. Her presence in a room turned heads, and her fine taste and sense of style impressed men and women alike. However, while she impressed people with her beauty and gentleness, with her brightness and laughter, few people ever saw her sadness, her despair at time passed and passing, out of sight, locked behind closed doors. Few people knew how she longed for direction and meaning, and a sense of herself as vital to life.

Perhaps captured as we can be by the surface of things, and the appearances of life, few people notice how sad and tired others are, and how tired and empty my sister had become. Those who did notice could no longer reach her, so far from the present moment she seemed to have strayed.

She had a sharp mind and a love of knowledge, and she questioned life. She wanted to know why life dealt the blows it did, why women were jealous of her, and why the men she loved could not commit and return her love. She questioned herself endlessly, so she might find one great thing to pour herself into, and become successful and strong in a new Ireland enamoured with the surface of things.

Perhaps as her own words failed her, and the words she might speak to the surface of things eluded her, she stood still in a time and place where no one could listen, or see, or be still long enough. Perhaps, in a frantic search to understand the surface and appearance of things, my sister forgot to breathe it all in, and to simply live. On March 12th, 2005, my sister Catherine took her own life.

I remember how much she loved music and she loved to dance. I think of her, and I think of what she loved. And while I turn questions over and over in my mind, I remember how easy it is to stray toward fear and self-doubt, so that I forget to simply look, and simply listen, and simply live.

There are no answers to all the questions. Sometimes, when I slow down enough, in the space between the "no more" of the past and the "not yet" of the future, there is an emptiness, and I thank God, because it is there I hold my sister, tenderly; the light and wind and rain in the tree above me is a reminder and it is enough.

Focusing the Inward Experience: A Step to Freedom

A 7 week workshop co-facilitated by Michelina Bertone, SSA and Dayna Kneeland.

You will learn the FOCUSING Process/Technique and explore the different life rhythms through expressive movement. You will learn how to deal with feelings, grow in self-worth and become more centred and connected.

Tuesdays 12 noon to 1:00 PM
Beginning September 27th
Annex Z (2090 Mackay), Room 05

Info and Registration:
Michelina Bertone, SSA - 848-2424, Ext 3591
mbertone@alcor.concordia.ca

Twilight Retreats

Sundays 3 PM - 8PM Followed by a shared supper
Annex Z–[2090 Mackay], Room 105

Info and reg.: Michelina Bertone SSA - 848-2424, ext. 3591
or mbertone@alcor.concordia.ca

Sharing the Word with God's Holy People

Fr. Georges M. Pelletier, OMV
Roman Catholic Chaplain

I took a week off from my work at Multi-faith Chaplaincy this past February, to return to Buenos Aires where I lived from 2002 until 2004, and join a small group of young lay missionaries on a mission of evangelization.

For the third time since February 2004 we visited the small town of Timote, located about 500 km from Buenos Aires. Approximately 400 people live in Timote. Our group (10 people or so) was composed of young men and women; half of them were university students.

Evangelization by the laity is a common practice in Argentina. It is not uncommon even to see high school students participating. Their joy, their youth, and their lively talents such as singing, dancing and playing musical instruments play a large role in carrying out such a mission. More than once I was struck by what the young missionaries could do through their simplicity and by the strong effect they had on people. What they brought to the people of the town was matched only by what the people gave them in return.

Fr. Georges with a few of his colleagues enjoying the evening with some of the people of Timote.

Our activities were guided by a common goal, simply stated: try and help people discover that they are deeply loved by God.

Half of our time was spent, divided in pairs, visiting the people in their homes, accepting their hospitality, spending time listening and observing "God's footprints" in their lives.

In the evenings there were a variety of other activities for the children, adolescents and adults of the town.

As I look back now on my short experience there, I am proud to realize I was first initiated to this type of work not so much through books or local priests but by a few young and enthusiastic university students. Imagine, a pastor being taught by his sheep in ways of bringing the Good News to the most isolated people! God's ways, who can understand them? They are just so wonderful! 🕮

Would You be Interested In An Opportunity To Accompany Fr. Georges on a Visit to Timote ?

Fr. Georges would be interested in having students from Concordia accompany him to share the Word with the people of Argentina. Participants would have to be able to speak Spanish, and will work together with Fr. Georges to raise the funds for their trip.

For more information, contact:
Fr. Georges Pelletier, OMV
848-2424 Ext. 3587
georgpel@alcor.concordia.ca

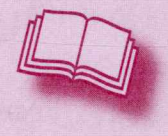
Where am I in the Story?

Reading the Christian Bible and Finding Our PLace Within It

Please bring:
Your questions
Your enthusiasm
Your life experiences
Your social conscience

Tuesdays, 2:30-4:00 PM
Annex Z (2090 Mackay), Room 05
Starting September 27th, 2005

For more information, please contact
Ellie Hummel
Call **848-2424 ext. 3590** *or email*
Ellie.Hummel@concordia.ca



Zen Meditation

With Myokyo,
Abbess of Centre Zen de la Main

Thursdays - Annex Z (SGW) in Room 05

Instruction for beginners: 11:45 AM
Sitting: 12 (noon) - 1:00 PM
Optional question/discussion period 1:00-1:30 PM

Beginning September 15th
For more information call: 514-842-3648

Discovering the Wonder that I Am

A Special 4-part Seminar.

Do you want to know yourself better?

Would you like to discover your unsuspected potential to face the numerous challenges of everyday life?

This seminar is designed to help you achieve your goals using much less energy while helping you to feel better and happier.

Wednesdays, October 5th to 26th
4:30-6:00 PM, Loyola CHapel
Information
Fr. Georges Pelletier, OMV
848-2424, Ext 3587

An Adventure Into Yourself:

Discovering your Personality through the Enneagram.

The enneagram is an ancient tool that helps us understand ourselves by describing nine distinct personality types, each a reflection of different patterns of thought, feeling and action. It helps determine what is important to us and how we interact with the world to fulfill our hopes and dreams.

Facilitated by Sheilagh McGlynn
Sunday, September 25, 2005
1:30 pm – 9:00 pm
Annex Z
(2090 MacKay)

Free for Concordia Students
$15 for all others

For more information or to register, contact Ellie Hummel at 848-2424 x 3590 or Ellie.Hummel@concordia.ca

Do you have questions, but don't know where to go?

DO YOU FEEL OVERWHELMED WITH UNIVERSITY?

Want to check out ways in which you can get involved in university life?

PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

DO YOU FEEL OVERWHELMED WITH UNIVERSITY?

Then come to the Peer Support drop-in centre. It is staffed by students who have taken extensive training. They will listen to you, give you information and refer. They know what it is like to be a student, because they are students, too.

Students Helping Students

SGW: Monday to Thursdays – 11 am to 5 pm
Annex Z (2090 Mackay) Room 03 (basement)
Loyola: To Be Announced
Info: 848-2424 Ext. 2859

COME, CELEBRATE WITH US IN

THE LOYOLA CHAPEL

SUNDAY MASS

11:00 AM

MONDAY TO FRIDAY

MASS OR COMMUNION SERVICE

12:05 PM

The Chapel is located next to the ADMINISTRATION [AD] BUILDING on the Loyola Campus.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL:
848-2424 EXT: 3588

The Stories of Our Lives – A Memory and Identity Workshop

Monday, October 17th, 2005 2:45- 4:00
Annex Z, (2090 Mackay) room 05

Each of us weaves a personal narrative, creating meaning out of our experiences in highly individual ways. One way to access the invisible realm of inner narrative is through concrete objects that hold personal meaning and anchor memory. Please bring with you an object that you love: a book, a special candle, a prayer shawl, a tool... Come ready to speak and to listen: after all, nothing is as engaging as the stories of our lives!

Curious? Need more information? Contact Sharon Gubbay Helfer: Sharon.Gubbay.Helfer@sympatico.ca or contact Multi-faith Chaplaincy: 848-2424 x 3593

Jesus,
The Bread of Life

Do you want to deepen your understanding of...

1. Jesus' words:
   "I am the bread of life"
   "Take and eat. This is My Body"
   "Take and drink. This is My Blood"

2. How the Eucharist transforms our lives and makes us one

Join us for this 7-session workshop, that includes discussion, meditation on God's Word, sharing and ritual.

Mondays 12 noon to 1:00 PM
Beginning September 26th
Annex Z (2090 Mackay), Room 05

Info & Registration:
Sr. Michelina Bertone, SSA
848-2424, Ext 3591
mbertone@alcor.concordia.ca

A Seminar on the Eucharist

- Are you interested in learning more about what the "Celebration of the Eucharist" is all about?
- Do you see the idea of weekly participation at Mass as a privilege or an obligation?
- Have you ever received any information on the symbols of the Mass and their meanings?

Perhaps this seminar on a biblical understanding of the Eucharist is for you!

Tuesdays, 4:30 - 6:00 PM

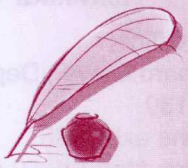
From October 4th to the 25th, 2005

In the Loyola Chapel

For more information:
Fr. Georges Pelletier, OMV
848-2424 Ext 3587

Writing the Sacred: Appreciating and Writing Sacred Poetry

Saturday, October 22, 2005
Registration and refreshments starting at 9:30 am
Workshop 10:00 am – 5:00 pm
Annex Z, (2090 Mackay), Room 05
$15 for Concordia Students / $30 for non-students (bursaries available)



In this workshop Ray McGinnis draws upon a splendid range of psalms and sacred poetry from the East and West. Throughout the workshop participants will get opportunities to compose their own sacred poetry. You will learn several writing techniques and explore timeless themes that speak to the human condition and our longing for the Source of life. You'll draw from your own life experience concerning matters of trust, wisdom, gratitude, confession, lament, creation, history and vision. You'll draw on the raw material of living your life to shape new poems as you contemplate the mystery of life.

For more information, contact Ellie Hummel at 848-2424 Ext. 3590 or Ellie.Hummel@concordia.ca

DO YOU LIKE TO BUILD...

Habitat for Humanity®

...Houses?
....An understanding of housing issues?
Would you like to be a member of the Concordia Chapter of Habitat for Humanity?

Building Homes; Building Hope: Habitat for Humanity is a program dedicated to the elimination of poverty housing by building homes in partnership with families in need.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO GET INVOLVED, CONTACT HABITAT@ALCOR.CONCORDIA.CA

Our In-house Team

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Phone ext: 3585
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Roman Catholic
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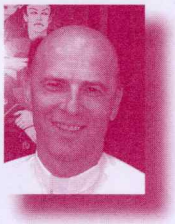

Fr. Georges Pelletier, OMV
Roman Catholic Chaplain
Loyola Office: AD 130-3
Phone ext 3587
georgpel@alcor.concordia.ca

Multi-faith Chaplaincy Locations:

Loyola Office:
Bernard Glover, Departmental Assistant
AD 130
Phone ext: 3588
Hours: Mon-Fri – 9 AM to 5 PM
Email: Multi-faith@concordia.ca

SGW Department Secretary:
Randy Montour
Annex Z (2090 Mackay) Rm-103
Phone ext: 3593
Hours: Mon-Fri – 9 AM to 5 PM
Email: Multi-faith@concordia.ca

Associate Chaplains:

Imam Salam Elmenyawi – Muslim
Email:salam@succedent.net

Rabbi Shlomo Mahn - Jewish
Email:montreal@chabadhouse.org

Dr. T.S. Rukmani – Hindu
Email:rukmani@alcor.concordia.ca

Dov Whitman - Jewish
Email:dov@hillel.ca

Mr. Manjit Singh – Sikh
Email:lo.man@sympatico.ca

Fr. John Tkachuk – Eastern Orthodox
Email:jtkachuk@videotron.ca

Myokyo Judith McLean – Zen Buddhist
czenmain@dsuper.net

Unitarian Associate – TBA

Silent Retreat at the Oka Monastery

October 28-30, 2005

An opportunity to be still, to reflect on your journey, and to share with others in a context of natural beauty, prayer, and peace.

The cost is $50 for students, $75 for non-students, and includes transportation, accommodation, and meals.

To register or for more information:

Fr. Georges Pelletier
848-2424, Ext 3587 or
Bernie Glover at Ext 3588
e-mail: bernard.glover@concordia.ca

For all calls to Concordia University dial 848-2424 and enter the proper extension at the prompt.

There are also many faith-based groups under the CSU banner.
For more information contact Multi-faith Chaplaincy or see the CSU Handbook.

Both Campus offices provide a warm and welcoming space. We invite you to drop by and visit! There is a lot more to Concordia Chaplaincy than you might imagine!

...and don't forget to visit our website at http://deanofstudents.concordia.ca/chaplaincy

Email: Multi-faith@concordia.ca

MULTI-FAITH CHAPLAINCY is a unit of *The Dean of Students Office*